DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 675 TM 860 532

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TITLE Everything They Ever Wanted to Know: Gathering Information for Public School Decision Makers.
INSTITUTION Austin Independent School District, Tex. Office of Research and Evaluation.
REPORT NO AISD-ORE-85-46
PUB DATE Apr 86
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, San Francisco, CA, April 16-20, 1986). Some appendices contain small print.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Data Collection; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Information Dissemination; *Information Needs; Participant Satisfaction; Program Improvement; Public Schools; *Questionnaires; *Research Methodology; *School Surveys; *Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Austin Independent School District TX

ABSTRACT

The Austin (Texas) Independent School District's Office of Research and Evaluation revised its surveying procedures in 1982. To reduce the demands on teachers and administrators, various surveys were consolidated and administered on a regular basis. Teachers and administrators were surveyed every fall and spring, high school students in winter, and parents and graduates occasionally. Computers were used to sample subgroups and compile questionnaire items for each respondent. The information needs of administrators, the superintendent, and board members were solicited. Results were delivered on a computerized printout, and responses were positive. Procedures for producing answer sheets and coding the data were improved. It was also possible to quickly compile information needed for administrative planning. Items from the teacher survey and some copies of the Questions for Students questionnaire are appended. (GDC)

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EVERYTHING THEY EVER WANTED TO KNOW:

GATHERING INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DECISION MAKERS

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Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, April 1986, San Francisco, California.

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Publication Number 85.46

TM 860 532

85.46

Everything They Ever Wanted to Know: Information Gathering for Public School Decision Makers

In the 1980's those of us who deal with information and the public schools meet conflicting imperatives at every turn.

> From the Board of Trustees: What does the community want? What do teachers think? Cut out paperwork.
>
> From the administration: What do staff think? How are programs succeeding? What is happening in the schools? What do staff need? Cut paperwork.
>
> From the teachers: Leave us alone and let us teach. Give us an opportunity to have input. Let us tell you how things really are. Cut paperwork.
>
> From the evaluator: How are the programs going? Who has what opinions? How much paperwork is there?

Survey data can provide the obvious source of information for many of these needs, yet the natural conflict between the need for information and the real mandate to cut out excess paperwork may stall our best efforts.

In 1982 the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) of the Austin Independent School District (AISD) devoted resources to revising our survey procedures. In order to limit demands on teachers and administrators, we began to consolidate various District survey attempts into ORE, and produced a schedule of surveys which we would conduct on a regular basis. We planned for fall and spring teacher and administrator surveys, winter high school student surveys, and occasional parent and graduate surveys. Early efforts included developing programs for the District's IBM mainframe computer, accessing personnel and student data files to:

> Select samples to meet designated requirements and identify each member of the sample by specified subgroups.
>
> Assign specific questionnaire items (one at a time or in groups) to specific individuals, randomly assign general items to portions of the sample, and limit the length of each survey.
>
> Print a unique questionnaire for each member of the sample, with the form identified only by a sequence number which matched a separate mail label.

We also began to communicate with central office administrators, the superintendent and board members, in an effort to accomodate their needs for information in our scheduling and producing surveys.

These procedures were used for two years, printing the surveys on plain white paper with responses circled, checked, or written in. Retrieving the data was a complex process, requiring a unique number for each item and the responses keypunched or entered on a screen. We found very positive reactions among the decision makers, who much preferred a printout delivered to their desks to the effort of conducting their own surveys. We even found positive reactions among teachers, if we can interpret an 85% return rate as positive.

For the 1983-84 school year we had printed a "blank" continuous form answer sheet, with only an ID number field, and a response field for up to 24 individual item responses, able to be preprinted and scanned by the District's optical scanner. Our programmers then wrote programs to sample and assign items as before (a sample item assignment sheet is shown in Attachment A). They formatted the item printing to fit the new form, and to preslug the ID number as well as printing it. These forms were scanned when they were returned, the responses read to a tape, and analyses could be begun immediately. Open-response items were printed on a separate last sheet, kicked out by the scanner, and read and summarized as appropriate.

In fall 1985 ORE was requested by the superintendent to acquire information for planning, and from the first meeting to the date when printouts of results were delivered required only two months. This included time for staff review of items, and a reminder mailed to teachers who had not returned their surveys within ten days. This process provided information for staff planning without requiring a massive "new" data gathering effort, and convinced some staff that data gathered within a regular framework could meet their needs.

Three copies of the 1986 Questions for Students survey are attached to this document. Each survey is different - each student received a different assortment of items randomly assigned by the computer program. The surveys were printed in order by school, and then

in order according to the student assignment for the period when the school prefered to administer the survey. The student surveys are printed with the teacher and student names, so teachers can distribute the forms. Students are assured in directions furnished to the teacher that their responses are confidential, except on the vocational items, where names are provided to vocational counselors. Since this survey is used to furnish course interest information to vocational counselors, a printout of student names for each course by grade is provided to the counselor at each high school within a week after surveys are returned to ORE.

There are no canned programs for this process. It requires a computer data base, a programmer, and specially printed forms. It is probably not practical for a small school district. The philosophy behind the forms may be the important change for our District.

No longer are teachers and campus administrators in AISD bombarded with questionnaires for this study and that study from September to May. No longer are sheets of open-ended questions collected and stored. Data doesn't come too late, and if relevant answers are available on stable issues the questions are not repeated. All District information requests go through the central process. Items are edited for clarity, piloted as necessary, and assigned to the appropriate sample. Responses are reported to the decision makers in a timely manner, in a report format (Attachment B) they have been trained to understand. "Emergency" quick-turnaround efforts are possible, when routine procedures have not acquired data to address the latest crisis.

We may not be able to tell everyone "everything they want to know," but we can provide opportunities for staff input, get answers for decision makers, and cut down on paperwork, all at the same time.

STUDENT SURVEY ITEM ASSIGNMENTS 1986

Grade 9 students:	Items 1, 3, 23, random 2 of group A, random 2 of group B, random 1 of group C
Grade 10 students:	Items 1, 3, 23, random 2 of group A, random 2 of group B, random 1 of group C
Grade 11 students:	Items 1, 3, 23, random 2 0f group A, random 2 of group B, random 1 of group C, random 1 of group D
Grade 12 students:	Item 3, random 3 of group B, item 18 to random 33% of students
PAL students:	Appropriate grade level set, + group E

Group A: Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (Vocational)
Group B: Items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 (General)
Group C: Items 16, 17, 18 (TEAMS)
Group D: Items 19, 20 (TEAMS grade 11)
Group E: Items 21,22 (PAL)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS 1984		District	Austin 2	Johnston 3	Lanier 4	McCallum 5	Reagan 6	Travis 7	Crockett 8	Anderson 9	LBJ 10	Robbins 14
1. Have you ever had a job for pay? a. Yes b. No	No.	11,513	1,114	1,295	1,356	1,097	1,161	1,383	1,904	1,391	666	86
	a.	85%	87%	85%	88%	87%	86%	84%	82%	86%	82%	90%
	b.	15%	13%	15%	12%	13%	14%	16%	18%	14%	19%	11%
4. How many hours a week do you work now?	T No.	5,811 50%	561	648	705	579	566	700	975	727	305	45
	Ave. Hrs.	15.8	13.1	15.4	16.7	14.5	15.7	17.9	15.9	15.5	17.5	22.1
5. What kind of job do you want to find this summer? a. None d. Part-time Permanent b. Part-time Summer e. Full-time Permanent c. Full-time Summer	No.	11,270	1,156	1,263	1,325	1,072	1,142	1,365	1,854	1,362	645	86
	a.	5%	9%	5%	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%
	b.	32%	42%	33%	28%	36%	30%	28%	32%	33%	28%	9%
	c.	31%	26%	32%	33%	31%	30%	34%	28%	33%	32%	29%
	d.	22%	17%	22%	24%	20%	26%	22%	24%	20%	24%	27%
	e.	10%	5%	9%	10%	7%	11%	11%	10%	8%	13%	29%
8. Are you interested in a vocational course that involves on-the-job training? a. Yes b. No	No.	11,389	1.168	1,287	1,352	1,085	1,155	1,370	1,840	1,385	660	87
	a.	60%	47%	57%	63%	54%	64%	66%	60%	62%	64%	81%
	b.	40%	52%	43%	37%	46%	36%	34%	40%	38%	36%	20%
9. To what degree do you now feel concerned about your own physical safety while you are at school? a. I feel safe. b. I feel reasonably safe. c. I have some concern about safety. d. I am very worried about safety.	No.	1,478	157	173	174	138	148	190	246	160	85	7
	a.	53%	62%	57%	47%	65%	47%	52%	55%	51%	41%	43%
	b.	33%	31%	28%	38%	24%	37%	35%	33%	36%	39%	29%
	c.	11%	6%	11%	14%	9%	13%	12%	11%	11%	17%	29%
	d.	2%	1%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	1%	3%	4%	0%
10. The presence of drugs on this campus is increasing. a. Yes b. No c. I don't know	No.	1,545	133	166	194	144	171	188	247	197	90	15
	a.	27%	47%	16%	30%	25%	30%	28%	22%	26%	29%	7%
	b.	12%	7%	16%	9%	13%	13%	11%	17%	8%	8%	27%
	c.	61%	46%	68%	60%	63%	57%	62%	61%	67%	63%	67%
11. If AISD had schools that specialized in certain areas of study, would you transfer to a special school to study? (Choose one) a. Would not transfer b. Math/Science/Engineering c. Fine Arts (Art, Music, Drama) d. Bus./Mangmt. (Typing, Accounting, etc.) e. Communications(Lang.Arts,Radio,TV,Film) f. Agriculture g. Computer Sci./Operation(Lang.Arts, Data Entry, Repair, Programming, etc.) h. Trade/Industry(Auto Mech., Printing, Cosmetology)	No.	1,371	144	156	162	138	122	162	236	176	71	4
	a.	34%	38%	33%	28%	32%	41%	38%	30%	35%	25%	50%
	b.	14%	10%	16%	17%	20%	12%	12%	14%	9%	18%	0%
	c.	7%	12%	5%	5%	8%	5%	9%	6%	7%	11%	0%
	d.	17%	19%	19%	19%	16%	13%	15%	18%	19%	21%	0%
	e.	4%	4%	5%	7%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	0%	0%
	f.	2%	1%		3%	4%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	0%
	g.	14%	10%	14%	15%	12%	16%	14%	15%	15%	18%	50%
	h.	8%	5%	8%	6%	5%	9%	9%	9%	11%	4%	0%

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13.DO YOU RECEIVE HELP ON HOMEWORK FROM AN ADULT AT HOME?
A. NEVER B. OCCASIONALLY C. OFTEN D. ALWAYS

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	A	B	C	D
TOTALS	542	170	293	55	24
		31.4%	54.1%	10.1%	4.4%
GRADE 9	163	26	96	27	14
		16.0%	58.9%	16.6%	8.6%
GRADE 10	151	38	92	13	8
		25.2%	60.9%	8.6%	5.3%
GRADE 11	128	46	70	10	2
		35.9%	54.7%	7.8%	1.6%
GRADE 12	100	60	35	5	0
		60.0%	35.0%	5.0%	0.0%

14.HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK ARE YOU NOW WORKING?
A. NONE C. 11-20 E. 31-40
B. 10 OR LESS D. 21-30 F. OVER 40

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	A	B	C	D	E	F
TOTALS	539	302	57	89	71	16	4
		56.0%	10.6%	16.5%	13.2%	3.0%	0.7%
GRADE 9	165	124	17	10	11	1	2
		75.2%	10.3%	6.1%	6.7%	0.6%	1.2%
GRADE 10	130	90	11	10	17	2	0
		69.2%	8.5%	7.7%	13.1%	1.5%	0.0%
GRADE 11	134	59	18	29	19	7	2
		44.0%	13.4%	21.6%	14.2%	5.2%	1.5%
GRADE 12	110	29	11	40	24	6	0
		26.4%	10.0%	36.4%	21.8%	5.5%	0.0%

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TEACHER SURVEY FALL 1985

9. THE SEVEN-PERIOD DAY FOR JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS IS WORKING WELL.
A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
B. AGREE D. DISAGEE

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	A	B	C	D	E
TOTALS	175/236 = 74.2%	60	65	24	18	8
		34.3%	37.1%	13.7%	10.3%	4.6%
JR HIGH	175	60	65	24	18	8
		34.3%	37.1%	13.7%	10.3%	4.6%
SECONDARY	175	60	65	24	18	8
		34.3%	37.1%	13.7%	10.3%	4.6%

10. THE CAREER LADDER IS MOTIVATING ME TO IMPROVE MY PERFORMANCE.
A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
B. AGREE D. DISAGEE

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	A	B	C	D	E
TOTALS	573/725 = 79.0%	39	112	167	127	128
		6.8%	19.5%	29.1%	22.2%	22.3%
ELEMENTARY	319	24	69	92	68	66
		7.5%	21.6%	28.8%	21.3%	20.7%
JR HIGH	76	4	16	26	16	14
		5.3%	21.1%	34.2%	21.1%	18.4%
HIGH SCH	178	11	27	49	43	48
		6.2%	15.2%	27.5%	24.2%	27.0%
SECONDARY	254	15	43	75	59	62
		5.9%	16.9%	29.5%	23.2%	24.4%

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Attachment B
(page 3 of 3)

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

TEACHER: JOHNSON STUDENT: SIUMP IWYLA

1. IN WHAT CAREER AREA MIGHT YOU CHOOSE TO TAKE COURSES NEXT SEMESTER? (CHOOSE TWO.)

1A. AG MECHANICS	2A. FOOD SERVICE
1B. AUTOBODY REPAIR	2B. HEALTH OCCUPATIONS
1C. AUTOMECHANICS	2C. HORTICULTURE
1D. BRICKLAYING	2D. INTERIOR DESIGN
1E. CHILD CARE	2E. MARKETING EDUCATION
1F. COMMERCIAL ART	2F. MEDIA TECHNOLOGY
1G. COMPUTER PROGRAMMING	2G. OFFICE EDUCATION
1H. COSMETOLOGY	2H. PHOTOGRAPHY
1I. CONSTRUCTION TRADES	2I. PHOTOTYPESETTING
1J. DATA PROCESSING	2J. PRINTING
1K. DRAFTING	2K. WORD PROCESSING
1L. ELECTRONICS	2L. NONE
1M. FASHION MERCHANDISING	

3. ARE YOU AWARE OF THE COMPUTERIZED OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK WHICH YOUR VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR HAS AS A TOOL IN CAREER PLANNING?
A. YES B. NO

4. DID YOU KNOW THERE IS A VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR ON YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS TO ASSIST YOU WITH CAREER PLANNING?
A. YES B. NO

5. ATTENDING A HIGH SCHOOL WHERE THERE ARE STUDENTS OF MORE THAN ONE ETHNICITY HAS BENEFITTED ME.
A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
B. AGREE D. DISAGREE

6. WHAT'S THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF YEARS STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL FOR INTEGRATION?

A. 1	F. 6	K. 11
B. 2	G. 7	L. 12
C. 3	H. 8	M. 13
D. 4	I. 9	N. NO OPINION
E. 5	J. 10	

7. IF I HAVE ALREADY MET COMPETENCY, I DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT PASSING THE TEAMS.
A. TRUE B. FALSE

8. MY EDUCATIONAL PLANS ARE:
A. TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATION
B. TO END SCHOOLING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
C. TO GO TO VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL TRAINING
D. TO GO TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
E. TO GO TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

9. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A VOCATIONAL COURSE WITH COOP (ON-THE-JOB) TRAINING ?
A. YES B. NO

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

TEACHER: WALKER STUDENT: SAUCEDO GARY G

1. THE STATE "NO PASS, NO PLAY" RULE ENCOURAGES ME TO MAKE BETTER GRADES.
   A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
   B. AGREE D. DISAGREE

2. ATTENDING A HIGH SCHOOL WHERE THERE ARE STUDENTS OF MORE THAN ONE ETHNICITY HAS BENEFITTED ME.
   A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
   B. AGREE D. DISAGREE

3. I PREFER NUMBER GRADES ON REPORT CARDS TO LETTER GRADES
   A. STRONGLY AGREE C. NEUTRAL E. STRONGLY DISAGREE
   B. AGREE D. DISAGREE

4. MY EDUCATIONAL PLANS ARE:
   A. TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATION
   B. TO END SCHOOLING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
   C. TO GO TO VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL TRAINING
   D. TO GO TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
   E. TO GO TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

5. IF I HAVE ALREADY MET COMPETENCY, I DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT PASSING THE TEAMS.
   A. TRUE B. FALSE

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

TEACHER: WALKER STUDENT: ACOSTA KEVIN

1. IN WHAT CAREER AREA MIGHT YOU CHOOSE TO TAKE COURSES NEXT SEMESTER? (CHOOSE TWO.)

1A. AG MECHANICS	2A. FOOD SERVICE
1B. AUTOBODY REPAIR	2B. HEALTH OCCUPATIONS
1C. AUTOMECHANICS	2C. HORTICULTURE
1D. BRICKLAYING	2D. INTERIOR DESIGN
1E. CHILD CARE	2E. MARKETING EDUCATION
1F. COMMERCIAL ART	2F. MEDIA TECHNOLOGY
1G. COMPUTER PROGRAMMING	2G. OFFICE EDUCATION
1H. COSMETOLOGY	2H. PHOTOGRAPHY
1I. CONSTRUCTION TRADES	2I. PHOTOTYPESETTING
1J. DATA PROCESSING	2J. PRINTING
1K. DRAFTING	2K. WORD PROCESSING
1L. ELECTRONICS	2L. NONE
1M. FASHION MERCHANDISING	

3. DID YOU KNOW THERE IS A VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR ON YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS TO ASSIST YOU WITH CAREER PLANNING?
   A. YES B. NO

4. DO YOU PLAN TO WORK PART-TIME DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR?
   A. YES B. NO

5. WHAT'S THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF YEARS STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL FOR INTEGRATION?

A. 1	F. 6	K. 11
B. 2	G. 7	L. 12
C. 3	H. 8	M. 13
D. 4	I. 9	N. NO OPINION
E. 5	J. 10	

6. WOULD YOU BUCKLE A SEAT BELT IF THEY WERE AVAILABLE ON SCHOOL BUSES?
   A. WOULD NOT BUCKLE.
   B. WOULD SOMETIMES BUCKLE.
   C. WOULD ALWAYS BUCKLE.
   D. I DON'T RIDE A BUS TO SCHOOL.

7. EACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WILL HAVE FOUR OPPORTUNITIES TO PASS THE TEAMS. IF THE TEAMS IS NOT PASSED, THE STUDENT WILL NOT GRADUATE.
   A. TRUE B. FALSE

8. MY EDUCATIONAL PLANS ARE:
   A. TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL BEFORE GRADUATION
   B. TO END SCHOOLING AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
   C. TO GO TO VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL TRAINING
   D. TO GO TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE
   E. TO GO TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY

9. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A VOCATIONAL COURSE WITH COOP (ON-THE-JOB) TRAINING ?
   A. YES B. NO

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

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